

The Redeemer Is Worshiped

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: Jesus is worthy of worship because He is the slaughtered Lamb who was slain and raised again for our redemption.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Revelation 4–5

Can you recall a time when you experienced the presence of the Lord in a palpable way during a worship service? What was that moment like? For some, the atmosphere may have been full of lively music and expressive actions. For others, it may have been the fittingness of the liturgy, the depths of the prayers being spoken, or the majesty of the music.

When it comes to worship, what matters most is the centrality of Christ. He must be the focal point of worship. It's not about a style or a preference or an obligation. Worship—which, by the way, encompasses more than just music—involves the heart's orientation toward Jesus, who is worthy of all praise.



How would you define *worship*? What characteristics should be true of a worshiper of Christ?

Group Time

Point 1: Worship the Lamb who is a worthy conqueror (Rev. 5:1-7).

¹ Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides, sealed with seven seals. ² I also saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne.

The chapters that follow the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 4–5) give us a glimpse of the throne room of God, where worship is unceasing. In Revelation 4, the focus is on God the Father. He is exalted as the Lord who is worthy of glory, honor, and power (4:11). The Lord—God the Father—is worthy. But suddenly, in chapter 5, the scene changes. We’re introduced to a scroll with seals and a puzzling dilemma that leads John to despair—*No one is worthy to open the scroll*. And John wept.

But then came the command: *Do not weep*. Like a royal announcement, we’re told that the *Lion of Judah*, the *Root of David*, is worthy. He is the human being who can undo the sin of Adam and open the scroll. We expect at this point to see a fierce and majestic lion who has won the victory! So we look for the conquering **lion**, yet we find a slaughtered **lamb** standing there instead. In both of these images, we see the glory of Jesus.



Why is it important that we hold both of these images together when we think of Jesus: majestic Lion and sacrificial Lamb?


Point 2: Worship the Lamb who is a worthy redeemer (Rev. 5:8-10).

⁸ When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song:


You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,
because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they will reign on the earth.

The image of the Lion and the Lamb gives way now to the praises of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, falling down before Him and praising Him for His redemptive work. But before the new song of praise is uttered, we're told that golden bowls filled with incense are present. These are the prayers of God's people. This means that in the heavenly throne room, we are present through the prayers we have offered.

 What does praying communicate about who God is and what He is like?

Why a new song of praise? Because of what the Lamb has done. He is worthy because He was slaughtered—the perfect, sinless Passover Lamb was sacrificed to purchase people for God by His blood. And not just the Hebrew people, as was the case in the exodus story, but people from *every* tribe, language, people, and nation.

 What are some newer songs you have grown to love for the way they showcase the glory of Jesus and His great salvation?

Voices from the Church

“Our worship should express more of what God has done for us, and less of what we will do for Him.”¹

—Matt Boswell

Sinlessness of Jesus: While the Bible affirms the full _____ of Jesus, it also affirms that Jesus was completely _____ throughout His earthly life. Even though His trials and _____ were real and similar to the rest of humanity's, Hebrews 4:15 confirms that Jesus did not sin.

Point 3: Worship the Lamb who is a worthy king (Rev. 5:11-14).

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. ¹² They said with a loud voice,

Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered
to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and blessing!

¹³ I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say,

Blessing and honor and glory and power
be to the one seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

In the next part of John’s vision, the worship service swells until it includes thousands and thousands of beings giving praise to the Lamb for what He has done. The majesty and glory of Jesus is on full display here as everyone and everything bows down to the Lord seated on the throne, and to the Lamb. Just what does this Lamb who laid down His life deserve? The songs tell us—He deserves everything!

The end of this section reveals the final hope, when all creation is freed from its bondage to decay and everyone can respond with full and heartfelt worship. We were created for worship. Our worship has been affected because of sin and suffering, but the day is coming when our worship will be perfect. John rejoices in the vision of everyone everywhere fully united in praise, through the power of the Spirit, in offering glory to the Creator and Redeemer who is worthy.

Worship should be carried out not only at a _____ level within a Christian’s life but also in joining with other Christians in the _____ act of worship and stewarding our _____ for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a _____ to non-believers of the greatness of God.



What activities other than singing can be considered worship?

My Mission

Because we have been forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, we worship as a way of life here on earth, saturated with anticipation of our worship of the Lamb in heaven.

- **In what ways does worship connect to evangelism and missions?**
- **How can your group worship together in ways that keep the focus on Christ?**
- **How does John’s vision of people from all tribes and languages and nations impact the way you think about worshiping with people from different cultures and ethnicities?**



Voices from Church History

“Who is this, both lamb and lion? He endured death as a lamb; he devoured it as a lion. Who is this, both lamb and lion? Gentle and strong, lovable and terrifying, innocent and mighty, silent when he was being judged, roaring when he comes to judge.”²

–Augustine (354–430)

Notes

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Revelation 4:1-8

“Day and night they never stop” (Rev. 4:8). The creatures sing forever: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.”

Why holy? What does it mean to praise God for His holiness? Simply put, to be “holy” means to be “set apart,” to be “unique,” or in a class all your own. Closely connected to God’s holiness is the reality of His righteousness—His blazing purity that makes Him different than anything else.

Why do the creatures repeat this refrain and emphasize the Lord’s holiness three times? The repetition tells us that God’s holiness is beyond our human comprehension. It’s not just that He is holy in the sense that a physical object might be “set apart” for use in a religious ceremony. It’s not just that He is holy in the sense that we too are holy—“set apart” as His followers, salt and light in a decaying, dark world. God’s holiness far exceeds anything we can imagine. Some have seen (probably rightly) a trinitarian overtone in the three-fold repetition here: God the Father is holy, and so is God the Son, and God the Spirit.

Regardless of why the ascription “holy” gets repeated, the point is clear: Worship of the Lord in the throne room of heaven goes on forever in honor of the One who is forever—who was, who is, and who is to come. Our acknowledgment of the holiness of God should lead to everlasting praise.

 What are 4-5 characteristics of God that relate to His holiness—His being set apart?

Voices from the Church

“*Worship* is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so.”³

—D. A. Carson

Day 2: Read Revelation 4:9-11

Not only do the living creatures give glory to the One seated on the throne but so also do the twenty-four elders. The latter praise Him for a specific reason: the Lord has “created all things, and by your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

What we see here is worship of God for His work of creation. Everything we see (and even what we don't) exists because of the overflow of God's love and power in creation. He is the One who created the world by His will (and through His Word), and He is also the One who sustains the world. Remember this: *We continue to exist only by the will of God.* Without God's sustaining breath, the world would collapse and disappear. It is only because God made the world and now sustains it that we have breath and life.



What are 4-5 aspects of creation that lead you to give God praise?

Day 3: Read Revelation 5:1-7

John wept at the thought of no one being able to open the scroll “or even to look in it” (Rev. 5:3). Imagine what must have gone through his mind in that moment. *No one will be able to bring about the happy ending to this war-torn world of suffering. No one will be able to conquer evil and rid the world of evil. No one will be able to restore the world and forgive our sins.*

Imagine this world going on forever, in all of its fallenness, with its beauty gradually snuffed out by increasing sin and selfishness, with nothing to stop its decay.

John “wept and wept” like those who mourn for the ending of the world's terrible exile. But just as Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matt. 5:4). And John is! The elder says to him, “Do not weep.” There is One (and *only* One) who has conquered and can open the scroll and bring the world to its rightful destiny.



What aspects of the world in its current state lead you to weep? How does Jesus' ultimate victory change the way you mourn?

Day 4: Read Revelation 5:8-10

This passage lifts us up to see our ultimate destiny. As A. W. Tozer noted in the following:

God made us to worship. That is why we were created ... He redeems us that we might worship again, that we might take our place again, even on earth with the angels in heaven, and the beasts and the living creatures. That we might feel in our hearts and express in our own way that humbling yet nevertheless delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overwhelming love—in the presence of that ancient mystery, that unspeakable majesty, that Ancient of Days.⁴

Tozer's description of worship as both *humbling* and full of *admiring awe* is accurate because these characteristics go together. Humility is a requirement for awe. We must stand in awe of something much greater than ourselves, and Revelation shows us the Son of God in all His glory and the proper response of humble adoration before the crucified Lamb.



In what ways does pride stand in the way of worship?

Day 5: Read Revelation 5:11-14

If you've been to a stadium somewhere to watch a game, you've probably done "the wave." It's a moment when enough people have an idea to start a pattern, and then as others join in, the wave spreads around the stadium again and again, with more and more people. The wave is a just a little bit of fun in a crowded environment.

Imagine the scale and the pattern in Revelation 5. Not a few hundred people but thousands upon thousands all joining in song—a deafening roar of praise to King Jesus! The throne room of heaven and the vision of John remind us of what will be true of the world when all the redeemed of all the ages unite their voices in song. Our worship today should be a foretaste of the glorious worship to come.



What are 10 truths about Jesus that make Him worthy of all worship today?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- Worship the Lamb who is a worthy conqueror (Rev. 5:1-7).
- Worship the Lamb who is a worthy redeemer (Rev. 5:8-10).
- Worship the Lamb who is a worthy king (Rev. 5:11-14).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



How does this passage indicate that God's purposes center on the worship of Jesus?



Why should we never separate our gospel mission from the priority of worship?

Notes
